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P A P E R S
IN
A G R I C U L T U R E.

No. I.

IMPROVED RAY-GRASS.

The LARGE SILVER MEDAL was this session voted to Mr. W. STICKNEY, of Ridgmont, near Hull, for a variety of Ray-grass superior to those commonly in cultivation. The following communication has been received from Mr. Stickney on the subject.

Ridgmont, near Hull,

RESPECTED FRIEND,

1 Mo. 16, 1826.

A FRIEND of mine having handed me a list of premiums, offered by the Society of Arts, &c. amongst which is the Silver Medal for a specimen of ray grass, and described in No. 23 of that list; and flattering myself that I have for several years been cultivating a sort which fully answers every description there given, I hereby offer myself as a candidate for No. 23 in your list, hoping that the printed de-

scription of the grass, with the annexed certificate of its merits, signed by several of my neighbours well acquainted with it; together with a few pounds of the seed, which I will take care to send, will be as much as will be required: but if a specimen of an entire plant is expected, I will take care to send as complete a one as the season of the year will afford. I am afraid no seed stems can at present be procured; but if as much of a plant as the season will afford is expected, I will thank thee to inform my friend, Wm. Iveson, who, I expect, will be the bearer of this, and he will communicate the same to me.

I am, very respectfully, thy friend,

A. Aikin, Esq.

Secretary, &c. &c.

WM. STICKNEY.

Ridgmont, near Hull,

1 Mo. 25, 1826.

RESPECTED FRIEND,

I sent by the post, on the same day on which I sent the grass-seed, a written communication, addressed to thee, offering myself a candidate for the medal; and also a written certificate, signed by the persons whose names are attached to the printed one, except one, viz. Richard Brigham, who is since deceased, which certificate I apprehend will comprise all that is required by the conditions. I am aware that the printed paper is more than you require; but as I wish nothing to be kept secret as to the manner of my obtaining the grass, I thought, as the printed paper gave a full description of that, it possibly might be a hint to others, by which they might probably obtain a variety even superior to mine. I have now six

or seven other sorts coming forward, some of which promise to have qualities superior to this now offered to your notice, but I have not yet had sufficient time fully to ascertain their merits.

As a complete plant, furnished with a seed stem, cannot at this season of the year be procured, I had requested my friend to inquire whether that part of the requisition was expected; if it is I wish thee to inform me immediately, and such as the season will afford I will send. Perhaps a small sod, of a few inches diameter, fixed in a flower-pot, will be the best.

I am, very respectfully, thy assured friend,

A. Aikin, Esq.

WM. STICKNEY.

Secretary, &c. &c.

Ridgmont, near Hull,

2 Mo. 20, 1826.

RESPECTED FRIEND,

I have herewith sent thee some specimens of my grass. Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, were gathered the second of this month: the seed of this was sown without a crop of corn, and without any manure on the land, the 18th of September, 1824. In the summer of 1825 it was seeded; the plants still have some of the old leaf and the stubble of the seed-stems attached to them. No. 1 was a plant rather detached from the general sward; the others were taken from where it was more thickly matted. Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8, gathered at the same time, are plants from seed sown on the 23d of September, 1825, but on account of the dryness of the soil did not vegetate, so as to be perceptible, until November. The land was fallowed, being well cleaned, and no manure

applied except lime ; manure is not applied, lest it should bring the seeds of other plants. Nos. 9 and 10 gathered the 3d of February ; sown with clover on wheat the 22d of April, 1825. From this field was reaped a heavy crop of wheat, and is now intended for grazing the next summer. Nos. 11, 12, and 13, gathered the 16th of February, and from the same as 5, 6, 7, and 8, as described above. Nos. 14, 15, and 16, gathered the 16th, from the same as 9 and 10, described above. Nos. 17 and 18 gathered the 16th, from the same as 1, 2, 3, and 4, as described before. Notwithstanding all these are plants of the same grass, yet they vary very much, according to soil, situation, and other local circumstances.

In thy last letter thou asks me if I know any thing of the comparative merits between Mr. Whitworth's grass and mine. With Mr. Whitworth I have been acquainted for some years : his grass I have never seen. I have requested at different times (for some years past), that he would furnish me with some of his seed, in order that I might contrast it with mine ; he has promised to do so, but has hitherto failed. The greatest proportionate demand for my grass (except in my own immediate neighbourhood) is in the north of Lincolnshire, where I suppose Mr. Whitworth's will be most known.

Had I not received thy last letter, describing the manner of drying and preparing the plants you requested to have, it was my intention to have sent you some specimens of the sward of my grass, from eight to ten or twelve years standing. Its most peculiar merit consists in forming a thick, luxuriant, and durable sward, and growing at all seasons of the year when the weather is mild. It is the least affected by drought of any grass in my knowledge :

when other pastures are burnt up, in dry weather, it will exhibit a fine luxuriant verdure.

I am, very respectfully, thy assured friend,

A. Aikin, Esq.

WM. STICKNEY.

Secretary, &c. &c.

CERTIFICATES.

Ridgmont, October 2, 1817.

We, the undersigned, occupiers and cultivators of land in Holderness, have this day viewed several plots of land, sowed at different periods of time by Mr. William Stickney, in his farm at Ridgmont, with the particular grass-seed cultivated by him. All the specimens show, that the sward of this grass is more readily formed and of much better quality than that of any other grass with which we are acquainted; and whether in permanent pasture or in seeding land, its superiority is sufficiently apparent.

JOSEPH STORR,
ROBERT BELL,
ROBERT STUBBING,
THOMAS DODDS,
JOHN COLLINS,
WILLIAM IVESON,
JOHN TAYLOR,
RICHARD BRIGHAM*.

About the year 1802 I commenced cultivating several sorts of grasses. I soon discovered that those worthy of cultivation were but few in number. Amongst several sorts I was then in possession of I found a variety of the

* Mr. Brigham is since dead.

ray-grass to have merit beyond any other: this variety I had selected from some particular rich looking plants. I continued to extend the cultivation of it for several years. About the year 1806, I formed an opinion, from observation, that some of our richest pastures continue their richness and verdure without the grasses ever being reproduced from seed. The appearance of the little field, in the front of the house of my friend Richard Brigham, led me to this conclusion: I had observed it to be always eaten very bare and never knew any of it produce seed; I therefore concluded it must be stocked with grasses of a permanent kind, and had a good deal of curiosity to ascertain what they were. I obtained of my friend, R. Brigham, a small sod considerably less than a square yard. I placed it in a situation where it had an opportunity of showing its seed, and to my great surprise it proved to be, nearly without exception, the variety of ray-grass now before the Society.

I continued to extend its cultivation every year, continuing also to contrast it with the best purchased ray-grasses and other grasses I could procure, and it has always maintained a very great and decided superiority. I was rather apprehensive for some time that its merit might have consisted in habit which it had acquired by soil or situation, or rather by the particular manner in which it had been treated (being always grazed), and that when it came to be cultivated like other ray-grass it might degenerate; but after more than ten years cultivation I did not find that that was perceptibly the case.

It has the property of forming a thick matted sward from the abundance of bottom grass which it continually puts out, and it continues to grow at all seasons of the year when the weather is mild. From this variety having esta-

blished itself in most of the richest and best pastures in Holderness, to the almost total exclusion of the other grasses, it has obtained the name of Old Holderness.

W. S.

We certify that the variety of perennial ray-grass, *lolium perenne*, of which a specimen is produced by Mr. William Stickney, of Ridgmont, in Holderness, has been cultivated by him, on his farm at Ridgmont, more than eight years; that he now has more than ten acres sown with it, for the produce of seed; more than forty acres sown entirely with it, and laid for swarth, of several years growth; and more than eighty acres sown along with red or white clover, and intended for hay or grazing for two or three years. We also certify that in our opinion it is superior to any other variety of the same species of grass; and referring to the annexed certificate, which we gave in the year 1817, we have no hesitation to add, that our subsequent observations and experience have enabled us to confirm the opinions then given by us.

Given under our hands this 16th of January, 1826.

ROBERT BELL.
JOHN COLLINS.
JOHN TAYLOR.
THOMAS DODDS.
ROBERT STUBBING.
JOSEPH STORR.
WILLIAM IVESON.

Specimens of the grass, as described in Mr. Stickney's second letter, are in the Society's collection.